Lesson 5: 2/11/20
Sonnets

Resources:

Shakespeare's Sonnets: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDpW1sHrBaU
How to Write a Sonnet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=he_IxFaYwAA
Why Shakespeare Loved Iambic Pentameter: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5IsuyUNu_4

Discussion:

a. What do you know about sonnets?
b. What are sonnets usually about?

Lesson:

2 types of sonnets:
1. Shakespearean or Elizabethan
2. Petrarchan or Italian

Today, let's focus on Shakespearean sonnets. Some things to know:
- Written in 14-lines: 3 4-line stanzas (called Quatrains) and 1 2-line stanza (called Couplet)
- Written in Iambic Pentameter: each line has 10 syllables that break into 10 iambs, or feet.

There are 3 things to keep in mind when reading/writing a Shakespearean sonnet:
1. Rhyme Scheme → abab cdcd efef gg
2. Iambic Pentameter → the rhythm of unstressed and stressed syllables;
    a. da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM du-DUM
3. Content and Structure → originally praised an individual, idea, or object in the first 2 quatrains, took a "turn" in the 3rd quatrain, and gave final judgments in the couplet

Let's use *Sonnet 130* to demonstrate:

Rhyme Scheme

A My mistress' eyes are nothing like the **sun**;
B Coral is far more red than her lips' **red**;
A If snow be white, why then her breasts are **dun**;
B If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her **head**.

C I have seen roses damasked, red and **white**,
D But no such roses see I in her **cheeks**;
C And in some perfumes is there more **delight**
D Than in the breath that from my mistress **reeks**.

E I love to hear her speak, yet well I **know**
F That music hath a far more pleasing **sound**;
E I grant I never saw a goddess **go**;
F My mistress, when she walks, treads on the **ground**.

G And yet, by heaven, I think my love as **rare**
G As any she belied with false **compare**.

Iambic Pentameter

u / u / u / u / u /
My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
/ u u / u / u / u /
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
u / u / u / u / u /
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
u / u / u / u / u /
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

u / u / u / u / u /
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
u / u / u / u / u /
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
u / u / u / u / u /
And in some perfumes is there more delight
u / u / u / u / u /
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

u / u / u / u / u /
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
u / u / u / u / u /
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
u / u / u / u / u /
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
u / u / u / u / u /
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.

u / u / u / u / u /
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
u / u / u / u / u /
As any she belied with false compare.

Content and Structure

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

**The first quatrain is talking about the speaker's lover's looks. Unconventional; praising/highlighting that which is not conventionally seen as "beautiful."*

I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

**The second quatrain continues with the same sentiment as the first. Again, unconventional.*

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.

**The third quatrain continues with the same sentiment as the first and second.*

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

**The couplet acknowledges the lover's imperfections, but claims to love her regardless/in spite of them.*

Practice:

Let's practice writing a sonnet together.
First, choose a topic → something/one to praise.
Then, find rhyming words to work around.
Finally, fill in the quatrains and couplets using the iambic pentameter.